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THE FIELD OF EUROPEAN FOLK-LORE IN AMERICA.¹

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RATHER than rest content with the folk-lore results already achieved in the field, and confine our attention to closet-studies, we might be well advised, in the present period of reconstruction, to direct our energies to the systematic survey of the neglected avenues of European folk-tradition in America. To the inquisitive mind of many a scholar the vast and unexplored resources of that subject, when clearly indicated, should offer an irresistible appeal.

The leading members of this Society have long been aware of the vistas for research in folk ethnography and lore on this continent.² If I venture here to make a brief mention of the sources of unrecorded information, it is not that I expect to add materially to their knowledge. But as our keen desire for expansion and sounder methods in our pursuit is far from being widely appreciated and supported, it may be useful at times to review comprehensively our aims, explore new horizons, and re-examine why and how we should best utilize the sadly-forsaken domain of science intrusted to our keeping.

Under a deceptive appearance of uniformity and barrenness, the mentality of the Neo-American people is still endowed with various patrimonies of Old-World tradition. The complexity and extent of that heritage are derived not merely from the diversity of races that have invaded the new continent since the discovery, but also from their contacts with the native tribes.

Among what we may call the "primary sources" of intrusive folk-tradition here, the Spanish, the French, and the British elements — respectively located in the southwest, the northeast, and the centre — are the oldest and foremost. Their vitality and ancestral traits have to this day been preserved in their distinct geographic spheres.

¹ Address of the retiring President, delivered at the thirtieth annual meeting of the American Folk-Lore Society, held in Baltimore, Dec. 29, 1918.

² Compare "On the Field and Work of a Journal of American Folk-Lore" (JAFL 1 [1888]: 3-7).

While the British-American domain has in recent times greatly increased, that of the French has either shrunk or been split into several isolated sections. Outside of the larger Quebec group, we now find insular-like French settlements in the Maritime Provinces of Canada (The Acadians),¹ in Louisiana,² on the Detroit River,³ and at several points of the Northwest.⁴ The recession of the Spanish culture in the Southwest has also left a number of persistent vestiges as far north as Texas and northern California.⁵

Although more modern, the primary source of intrusive German oral tradition in Pennsylvania is of importance. After the establishment of the now-submerged Dutch and Swedish settlements on the Delaware and the Hudson Rivers (1638-55),⁶ the Krefelders came to Philadelphia, in 1683, and formed the nucleus of the Pennsylvania-

¹ The Acadians are outwardly somewhat different from the Quebec French-Canadians; their dialectical *nuances*, for one thing, seem to point to the fact that their French ancestors were from other provinces of France than those of the Quebec group.

² The French group in Louisiana is likely to be a complex one; many settlers there originally, or even recently, proceeded from Quebec and Detroit, while others are Acadians in origin. A Louisiana Acadian, M. Edmond Montet, has recently written to us: ". . . Il y a en Louisiane toute une mine pour un folkloriste canadien. La survivance acadienne s'est manifestée là avec autant de fécondité qu'au pays des aïeux. La littérature Louisianaise mérite d'être passée en revue. Bien d'autres écrivains que M. Alcée Fortier ont étudié la légende et l'histoire de ce pays. Connaissez-vous 'Le destin d'un brin de mousse' de Mlle Laure Andry, une acadienne; les 'Réminiscences acadiennes' de M. le juge Félix Voorhies, etc., sur ces mêmes sujets?" — The late Alcée Fortier (Louisiana Folk-Tales, MAFLS 2 [1895]: V, IX; also JAFL) has published material from Louisiana in the Creole dialect, which he describes thus: "The dialect spoken by the negroes of Lower Louisiana, and known by philologists as the Creole dialect, . . . is not merely a corruption of French . . . ; it is a real idiom with a morphology and grammar of its own" (p. X); ". . . The Louisiana folk-tales were brought over to this country by Europeans and Africans" (p. IX).

³ The origin of the French settlement on the Detroit River dates back to 1701. The French-speaking population there now numbers about twenty thousand.

⁴ In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Washington.

⁵ See *Los Pastores*, a Mexican play of the Nativity . . . notes by M. R. Cole (MAFLS 9 [1907]: IX-XI). Says Mr. Cole: "The popular production of an old Miracle Play on American soil, at the end of the nineteenth century, is really surprising, and brings home the fact that no inconsiderable part of the population of Texas is still Mexican in everything but the name." — "Father Parisot in his *Reminiscences* also refers to it as one of the traditional plays introduced by the early Franciscan Friars, and still performed at Christmas time in Mexico and on the American side of the Rio Grande."

⁶ See the "Jersey Dutch Dialect," by J. D. Prince (reprinted from *Dialect Notes*, 3 [pt. 6, 1910]: 459). We quote: "'Jersey' or 'Bergen County Dutch' is the usual name for the vernacular of the descendants of the original Netherland settlers in old Bergen County, N.J. . . . Up to thirty years ago, this was the common idiom of many rural districts in Northern New Jersey, employed alike by Dutch, English, German and French settlers . . . (It) now survives only in the memories of some two hundred old persons, nearly all of whom are over seventy years of age." "The Jersey Dutch was originally the South Holland or Flemish language, which in the course of centuries (*ca.* 1630-1880) became mixed with and partially influenced by English."

German colony, later amplified by the immigrations of 1710, 1818, and 1848.¹ From that centre small German-American groups have since spread in different directions.²

The complexity of these primary sources has in recent years been greatly increased by various movements of population within America, and by the influx and random dissemination of the motley crowds of European immigrants.³

We may also refer to the ubiquitous — especially in the South — and historically important African element, which has become the vehicle of much European lore, while preserving various native features.

Ethnologists, in their studies of American Indians, have observed foreign or European elements in the aboriginal traditions, arts, and customs. These we shall call "secondary sources." Barely a few hundred thousand in the United States and Canada, the pure-blooded or half-breed people in Mexico and Central America, comprise more than half of the total population. The Spaniards and the Mexicans, having now mingled together for many centuries, must have reciprocated in the exchange of each other's culture. The native Mexicans, more particularly, seem to have retained within their own lore an immense stock of old Spanish traditions. To a lesser degree the scanty tribes of the North have assimilated various attributes of their white invaders. Decorative patterns, technical devices, and folk-tales, for instance, are now mixed promiscuously with native themes.

The problem of unravelling the ancient data from recent interpolations has proved an intricate one; and, the recorded Indian materials being bulky, they are bound some time to loom large in the attention of analytic scholars. How could one safely assert that a narrative or a design is American or European in origin, when barely any material from either side is at hand for comparative purposes? Although the Spanish and French, much more than the English, primary sources of oral tradition, have invaded the native field, who could, without further materials, define precisely their respective spheres of influence, especially with regard to the Western Plains? How and whence came in America, for instance, the widely known stories of the wily Fox or Rabbit playing tricks upon his gluttonous

¹ Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans, by E. M. Fogel (1915), p. 3: "It would seem a conservative estimate to say that more than 500,000 people in Pennsylvania alone understand Pennsylvania German and that 300,000 speak the dialect." "The more distinctive Pennsylvania German counties . . . have a population of more than one and one quarter millions." Mr. W. J. Wintemberg, of the Anthropological Division, Geological Survey, Ottawa, has made an extensive collection of folk-materials among the German-Canadians, which may some time be published through this Society.

² "The Portuguese Element in New England," by H. R. Lang (JAFL 5 [1892]: 9-18).

³ For instance, the French population of New England now is about equal to that of the Province of Quebec.

and silly cousin the Wolf? While many episodes in that cycle are found both in the oral narratives and in mediæval literature of Europe ("Le roman du Renard"), they also occur in the traditions of Central Africa. The question, therefore, is, Were they introduced here by the Spaniards, the Negroes, the French, the Dutch,¹ or any other? The list of similar problems is now growing into an exceedingly long one. A satisfactory solution may be reached only when we have secured enough parallel versions or examples of the same themes among the different races of America.²

We should also bear in mind that some intrusive elements in the native lore may go back to foreign sources no longer surviving independently on this continent. The former Russian occupation of Alaska and the adjacent strip of the Northwest Coast, the more ancient Scandinavian colonization of Greenland,³ the Dutch and Scandinavian settlements at Port Royal (1562), Jamestown (1607), and in the New Netherlands and New Sweden, on the Delaware River (1638-55),⁴ are quite likely to have left obscure traces in the traditions of the Indian populations.

Let us now revert, for closer analysis, to the primary sources of British-American and French-American folk-tradition.

Although abundant British folk-lore materials have been gathered in the United States since 1888, and published chiefly in "The Journal of American Folk-Lore," far more remains to be done. Even in the field of the folk-song and ballad, where such excellent results have been obtained by many noted students and collectors,⁵ the possibilities are too vast and indefinite yet to be estimated. From reliable in-

¹ The Boers in South Africa, and their Zulu neighbors, are said to possess a part of the same cycle.

² Negative evidence should never be accepted, except after exhaustive observation.

³ See A Phonetical Study of the Eskimo Language, by William Thalbitzer (Meddelelser om Grønland, 31 : 34-35); The Ammassalik Eskimo, by the same author (*Ibid.*, 39 [1914] : 332); An Anthropogeographical Study of the Origin of the Eskimo Culture, by H. P. Steensby (Sætertryk af Meddelelser om Grønland, 53 : 218). — C. G. Leland, in The Algonquin Legends of New England (1884), insisting in a rather uncritical way upon the reminiscences in Eskimo and Algonkin mythology of Scandinavian themes, said (p. 11), "When we learn that the Norsemen, during the three centuries of occupation of Greenland, brought away many of the marvelous tales of the Eskimo, it is not credible that they left none of their own."

⁴ Fogel, Beliefs and Superstitions of the Pennsylvania Germans, p. 1. The Dutch and German elements are still conspicuously present in the neighborhood of Halifax; and a German dialect is spoken in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia.

⁵ Among other authors, we note Child, Newell, Belden (Missouri), Barry (Irish material, Kentucky, etc.), Kittredge, Brown (North Carolina), Pound (Nebraska), A. Smith (Virginia), Perrow (South), Peabody, Tolman, Lomax (cowboy songs), Wyman (Kentucky), and Campbell and Sharpe. See bibliography in "Ballads and Songs," edited by G. L. Kittredge (JAFL 30 [1917] : 283-369); also "English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians," by Olive D. Campbell and Cecil J. Sharp (1917), 336-337.

formants we have recently learned that there is a large number of come-all-ye's, sailors' chanties, and other songs to be recorded in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, in Ontario, and in the lumber-camps of Quebec, Wisconsin, and Michigan. For instance, no less than three hundred and fifty old-time songs were — according to a list made up some time ago — included in the repertory of a single Irish singer, William O'Connor, Sr., now aged eighty-three, of North Low, Quebec. In the very city of Ottawa we now have at our disposal a singer that knows "a large number of shanty come-all-ye's." Newfoundland,¹ Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia would also furnish — so we have repeatedly been told — an incredible number of sailors' chanties and other songs. The number of good singers available, we feel sure, is still much larger than could ever be fully utilized by folk-lorists.

If nursery and play rhymes and current superstitions have already received considerable attention here, it would be a mistake to believe that these subjects no longer deserve the attention of the collector. As to English folk-tales and ancient technology or material culture, it is amazing to realize that practically nothing has yet been achieved. These very subjects have apparently fallen out of sight. Barely a few English narratives have, since 1888, been published in the "Journal of American Folk-Lore;" and no attempt has apparently been made at the study of British folk-ethnography: that is, the study of old technical processes, useful arts, and ways of living.

The existence of an antiquated technology, especially in the older communities, is still remembered by many people, and several vestiges of it have not yet disappeared. Folk-tales and narratives recited in English, on the other hand, were a few years ago to be heard in the lumber-camps of Wisconsin, Ontario, and New Brunswick. At least, so we have been told by many of our French-Canadian informants who usually spent their winters there.

The field of Gaelic-American lore, language, and custom is one of extraordinary interest, although it has been ignored or neglected by those who should naturally be interested in it. If there may not be much Irish-Gaelic preserved on this continent, such is not the case with the Scottish branch, which is still thriving in large sections of Nova Scotia, in Cape Breton, and to a lesser degree in Glengarry County, Ontario. (A paper on this subject is being prepared at our request by Mr. Edward J. O'Brien of Boston, who had good opportunities for making observations in parts of that field.)

We may speak with greater familiarity of the French element in America, as it has recently come under our active observation. Louisiana has already furnished to Alcée Fortier, one of the founders of our

¹ The late Bernard Robertson of Bridgewater, N.S., has made a collection — still unpublished — of Newfoundland come-all-ye's.

Society, a small number of Créole tales, published in our *Memoirs* and *Journal*. Some folk-songs and anecdotes have been gathered independently in Quebec; but those interesting specimens did not suffice to stimulate research in probably one of the most fertile fields of folk-tradition in existence. Varied, and indeed inexhaustible, are the traditional resources of the distinct Quebec and Acadian French groups; and abundant materials might, we presume, be rescued from oblivion in the Louisiana, Detroit, and the Western districts.

When closely scrutinized, the Quebec section, for one, does not appear to be absolutely homogeneous. With insufficient materials, we have already noticed local diversities in the familiar stock of tales, songs, anecdotes, in the technology and the mode of living, and in the linguistics. This is not surprising, as the three original settlements of Quebec proper, Three-Rivers, and Montreal, were, on the whole, established by different immigrants, often from different French provinces (especially Normandy and the Loire River provinces), under leaders sometimes in conflict with one another. The traditional rivalry resulting from ancestral divergences had not disappeared thirty years ago, when Quebec laborers in Montreal were sometimes ostracized by their local confrères.

The Quebec and Montreal regions have recently engaged the attention of some of us, particularly M. Massicotte and myself. The collection of a huge amount of data ¹ from over half a dozen localities has brought to our mind many complex problems of general interest bearing on the origin and diffusion of ancient traditions disseminated under different forms in many countries. Many of those problems could not be solved without systematic and all-round investigations in other districts in Canada, or in the provinces of France from which the ancestors came.

In the Quebec group proper, there are several spheres, the characteristic traits of which are only vague to us. Many deep-seated peculiarities distinguish from each other the people of the north and south shores of the St. Lawrence below Quebec; of Beauce and Gaspé Counties, for instance. To what are these due? To recent evolution and differentiation within Canada, or to conservation of ancient cultural forms? Although our impression — in some cases, definite knowledge — leads us to believe that conservatism is the chief factor, more extensive surveys will enable us to disentangle what is modern from what is ancient.

Some people believe that the French oral traditions in Canada have remained undisturbed since the time of the English conquest (1750). All relations with the mother country being abolished, the

¹ About 3000 versions of folk-songs, 300 folk-tales and anecdotes, and much information on customs, beliefs, and material culture, have, in the past four years, been recorded.

popular lore here would have been preserved pure and archaic; that is, it would be that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France. That theory is, indeed, true to quite an extent. It might be added, that, the immigration having on the whole ceased by order of the King about 1673, the bulk of the imported traditions was already here before that date; but grave errors would result from such a presumption, if it were relied upon to fix the age of any data gathered indiscriminately. Even when parallels are also found in France, it is not always safe to say that the Canadian variants were introduced here before 1673 or 1750. Any accidental contact since is likely to have led to oral exchanges of ancient knowledge. We ourselves have noted several such cases. For instance, about 1830, two carpenters, named Bourget and Maufond, came from France, and worked for the Hudson Bay Company in the Tadoussac region. Two of our old singers, Hovington and "Louis l'aveugle," dictated to us several old songs which they had learned from them years ago. In the conservative and rather undisturbed county of Charlevoix we recorded, in 1916, what is likely to be a German folk-tale. An old woman named Bouchard recited a version of "The Three Wishes" resembling closely that of Grimm, and the like of which had not yet been recorded in Canada, except among the Ontario Pennsylvania German. Our inquiry brought out the fact that over sixty years ago the story-teller had learned it at Saint-Fabien (Rimouski), her birthplace, from a man named Berger, belonging to one of three families nicknamed "les Allemands" (the Germans). Although their German origin was only a memory, it may be presumed that the great-grandfathers were German soldiers of the Hesse-Darmstadt or Meurons regiments in the British Army, disbanded in Canada during or after the war of independence. The tale of "The Three Wishes" in Canada is therefore no doubt derived from an intrusive German source. Instances of this kind are probably many. When other information fails, it may safely be deduced that a particular *datum* is ancient in Canada when its divergent variants are archaic and widely known. An occasional song, such as the "Complainte du juif errant," may be comparatively modern while known almost everywhere; but all the versions are similar in every respect, and do not differ materially from those recorded in France. A common printed or manuscript source probably accounts for this exceptional case of diffusion.

Taking it for granted that vast stores of European folk-tradition are available in America, we may now ask whether a genuine attempt should be made to record at least a part of what is doomed to eventual oblivion; and, if so, what plan and methods are best adapted to that purpose.

A vague impression prevails in some quarters that the study of folk ethnography and lore properly belongs to European students. Facilities, it would seem, are all in their favor, and the ancient legacy itself is merely the privilege of unprogressive old-country folks. Our greatest difficulty in organizing an Ontario Branch of the Folk-Lore Society comes from the refusal of most people to believe that there is any folk-lore in English Canada. Quebec is pointed out to us as the only promising field. Lack of insight, of course, is the only ground for such a notion. The material to be obtained almost everywhere in America is of great value to science and art, and we should have a deep interest in its ultimate preservation.

When the early settlers, or even the modern immigrants, arrived here, they did not renounce their ancestral traditions and culture, which still cling to them as a birthright. Far from being shorn of this patrimony, they unconsciously grew more attached to it on account of their isolation. Many a survival of ancient culture has to this day thrived on these shores, that in Europe has now been abolished by modern conditions. There is no reason, therefore, why American scholars should feel indifferent when the study of a rapidly-vanishing phase of European history lies well within their grasp.

We often hear of the well-advertised aim of making American art more self-reliant, and independent of European dictates. Musicians, painters, literary men, are seeking their way to a healthy national art; but we may wonder at the reason for their comparative failure. The standards of their art still remain overseas, as they have not fully developed their individuality and style in contact with the themes of their own environment. The Russian school of music for the past fifty years has made wonders out of the folk-melodies of the peasants; but here no serious attempt has been made at the utilization of endless thousands of folk-songs from the white settlers or the Indians. Still their intrinsic value is second to none. Some musicians, it is true, have indicated the direction, but it is about all that has been accomplished.

The historic value of the folk-materials is here of more concern to us. Although the various European fields in America were included in the original programme of the founders of this Society, in 1888,¹ Indian and British materials have until recently monopolized its attention. The credit for the results achieved goes to American folklorists interested exclusively in European-American materials, and to ethnologists devoting themselves to the study of the natives. The connection between these two sets of scientists within the American Folk-Lore Society seems to have been somewhat artificial. The need felt by many ethnologists of disentangling their interwoven

¹ JAFL I (1888) : 3.

European and Indian data, in order to arrive at safer historic deductions, has recently developed in them a genuine interest in the study of the European primary sources. The gathering and publication of Spanish, French, and African traditions by members of our Society since 1913 are largely due to the sound policy of Dr. Boas, our editor.

Interest in the French field was at first limited to the folk-tales that had penetrated the Indian lore; but such limitations were soon cast aside when the possibilities were better understood. There is no reason, indeed, why ethnologists should not welcome the most complete survey of intrusive lore in America for its own sake. If such data are indispensable for their comparative studies, they are by themselves of the greatest value. No loss of effort through useless duplication of results on the new and the old continents need be expected. Too little has yet been done to impair the novelty and attractiveness of our subject. If we should fail to secure for posterity the ancient documents left to our care, a permanent and heavy loss for European history will inevitably result.

Being agreed, I presume, upon the urgency of systematizing folklore research, what plans and methods, we may ask, should be adopted in the survey of our inexhaustible fields and in the preservation of recorded materials?

Private initiative and casual observation are mostly responsible for what science has as yet derived from the primary sources of neo-American folk-tradition. No official, permanent, and sufficiently subsidized attempt in that direction stands to the credit of any institution.¹ No survey has yet been contemplated anywhere, as there are no establishments for financing this kind of field-research, no professional folk-lorist and staff in charge of a consistent plan, no adequate means of storing specimens or information, and no great facilities for publication. The Journal and Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society have until now been the only suitable serial for folk-lore; and its random supply of contributions and articles is exclusively due to the personal generosity of ethnologists, professors, chance folk-lorists, or amateurs. We all regret that its painfully small budget should not even suffice for the printing of available manuscripts. It is gratifying, however, to realize how much has

¹ Spanish-Mexican materials were collected, before the war, under the auspices of the International School of Archaeology and Ethnology in Mexico. "As part of a general survey of Porto Rico conducted by the New York Academy of Sciences in co-operation with the Insular Government, Dr. J. Alden Mason was sent, during the years 1914-15, to collect the folk-lore of the island" (JAFL 29 : 423). Although several extensive surveys in Quebec have, since 1914, been undertaken under the ægis of the Anthropological Division of the Geological Survey of Canada, the subject has not an independent status in that institution.

been achieved, since 1888, through a loose organization of casual and dispersed elements.

As Dr. Pliny Earle Goddard pointed out, in his address¹ to this Society in 1914, "it is certain the time will come when the study of folk-lore as a scholastic pursuit will stand by itself," and when "a critical method will develop which will make the study of primitive literature an end by itself, a serious and worthy pursuit." We may add that the diversity and immensity of each subject within the science of folk-lore and the aptitudes and technical abilities required of the specialist make it imperative that a judicious subdivision of functions should be planned in the early stages.

If full use is to be made of field opportunities and the materials obtained, greater technical knowledge than in the past should be the personal endowment of every investigator. Vocational training here is indeed indispensable. The special study of English, Gaelic, German, French, and Spanish sources can best be carried on by students designated in advance by temperament, early training, and culture affiliation. Folk-music, literature, and technology, in particular, are highly complex subjects, requiring experienced and delicate handling at the hands of experts.

Accurate observation and speedy recording in the field are among the essentials, and it is here that amateurs are naturally most deficient. A well-equipped collector may in a day make an adequate record of data that an untrained observer will fail to secure even imperfectly in a month of labor, or even dismiss altogether.

A few "stay-at-home" folk-lorists have in the past succeeded in getting information from distant correspondents. An elaborate attempt was made in 1852 by the French Government to collect the folk-songs of France through the medium of government departments and schools.² Although bulky, the results were so disappointing that

¹ JAFL 28 (1915) : 18.

² The instructions to would-be collectors prepared by J.-J. Ampère, acting on behalf of the French Government, are often cited or referred to. T. T. Crane's *Chansons populaires de France* (p. XXII) contains interesting details on the origin of the enterprise. We quote: "In 1852 M. Fortoul, then Minister of Public Instruction, brought in a project for the collection of the popular poetry of France, which was approved by the President of the Republic. It is said that Prince Louis Napoléon, before his accession to power, met in Switzerland J. M. Firmenich, the author of *Germaniens Völkerstimmen* (Berlin, 1843-65), who spoke to him enthusiastically of the popular poetry of his own country and made the prince promise, if he came into power, to have an official examination made of that of France. The whole subject was referred to the philological section of the 'Comité de la langue, de l'histoire, et des arts de la France,' and J. J. Ampère, of the French Academy, was charged with drawing up instructions to be sent into the various departments. . . . A great mass of material was sent in, in response to the circular of the government, and was classified by MM. Rathery and Villegrille, members of the committee. The worth of the material varied, of course, but much that was valuable was

they were never published. A recent investigation on Spanish-Mexican lore, with the help of school-teachers and pupils, has proved, it is said, of considerable value.¹ While this procedure has in some cases succeeded to a certain degree, it almost inevitably leads to disappointment in British and French countries. After some experiments, we have come to the conclusion already reached by Rossat,² in French Switzerland; that is, personal investigation in the field by trained observers is the only satisfactory method of obtaining good and extensive results. An expert field folk-lorist finds no difficulty, when he has secured good informants, in collecting an average of forty or fifty songs or ballads in a day's work, the texts being taken in stenography, and a few stanzas recorded on the phonograph.³ Folk-tales and anecdotes are best taken down in short-hand under speedy and unchecked dictation. The story-tellers cannot easily depart from their habits and accustomed style, and they do not usually narrate well under difficulties. Notes on technology and useful arts have to be supplemented by drawings, photographs, or the actual specimens for museum study. In every case the most complete local history of the data must be secured. And the fact that such care has not been shown by many ethnographers is no excuse.

Our customary inquiries on the remembered origin of songs and folk-tales have brought us valuable knowledge. They usually made it possible to trace a narrative back to the place where it was learned by the informant so and so many years ago. If most of the texts are memorized before the age of twenty, within the family or the village, there are many others that are picked up as chance offers, in the course of travels or from visitors. It is thus quite possible to find that the minimum age of a tradition is more than a hundred and fifty years; and if at that time it was known under divergent forms, well diffused over regions distant from each other, useful notions may be gained as to the ultimate time and place of origin. Such notes also enable one to judge of the extent of family or group traditions and of foreign elements. That such information should be

undoubtedly saved from destruction. For some reason the law for the publication of the collection was repealed and the manuscript was deposited in the National Library. . . . It may be of interest to American scholars to know that a complete copy of the collection was made some years ago for the library of Harvard University." After sending our manuscript to the printer, we found an earlier account of the same event, by E. Rolland (*Mélusine*, 2 : 296), from which Crane is likely to have derived his information.

¹ Only seven per cent of the letters requesting general information on prospects for local folk-lore investigations, sent to the parish priests of Rimouski and Gaspé Counties (Quebec), received any acknowledgment.

² *Les chansons populaires recueillies dans la Suisse romande . . . par Arthur Rossat; tome premier* (Publications de la Société suisse des traditions populaires, 1917), p. 5.

³ The small Standard Edison phonograph is the only recording-machine that has yet been used extensively for field-work, in America.

sought, offers little doubt, particularly in America, where racial elements are mixed in almost every district. The most conservative and undisturbed centres themselves have surprises in store for the careful student.

It is not enough to make a faithful and complete record in the field. The publication of first-hand materials should also be made according to the same high standards. Much is unfortunately left to be desired in this respect. To speak of folk-music only, it seems that barely any publication thereof has yet shown great accuracy, or even real concern with the fundamental problems involved. Collections of European or Indian tunes usually are made by musicians or amateurs readily satisfied with their own subjective reactions and resulting hasty transcriptions. Extensive adulterations are afterwards introduced in the script so as to make it more acceptable to the unsophisticated reader. Even specialists do not seem, in most cases, to have overcome difficulties in making an accurate written reproduction of their phonographic documents.¹ Yet recent experiments have shown how insufficient and faulty are simplified or "doctored" transcriptions of strange folk-melodies. If European tunes are, at least in cases we know, very intricate, the Indian music is incomparably more puzzling to our ear. Subjective appreciations, when critically directed, may lead to more or less satisfactory results, but nothing short of objective tests with mechanical devices can help in solving the riddles of unknown systems of intervals and rhythm. If they were merely to rest upon available published documents, conclusions on English and French folk-tunes would be quite misleading. For one thing, the texture and quality of the traditional melodies so far recorded in Quebec are far superior to anything we should have expected, had we depended upon published parallels at our disposal. In the absence of critical field-studies in western Europe, we cannot soundly compare materials yet; but we presume that, if the facts were at last revealed in their entirety, the same traits and intricacies would, in different directions, manifest themselves as part of an archaic system of music formerly existing in Europe.² No feature in traditional tunes should be dismissed without full and critical examination; for a casual listener is no judge of what is essential and what is due to individual peculiarities or interpretation.

¹ Miss Frances Densmore, in her remarkable study of Teton Sioux Music (BBAE 61: 7), makes the following statement: "It has been found that the final transcription [the result of six or more readings of the phonograph cylinder] is usually the simplest, as by repeated observations the ear eliminates bytones and the mannerisms of the singer."

² An amusing statement is made in print by an eminent French collector of songs, to the effect that for many years all the folk-songs he recorded were in major or minor, because it had not yet dawned upon him that other modes were also in current usage.

To conclude, we may say that folk-research should be granted the status it deserves, and established upon an entirely new basis. Carried on by well trained and directed folk-lorists, it can only rest upon a sound financial basis, and have its headquarters at well-equipped museums for folk-ethnography. Publication facilities should be regulated by the corresponding needs. So much energy and wealth are squandered everywhere to no purpose, that every active member of our Society should feel it his duty to bring about a renewed and practical revival of interest in our aims. For the past fifty years a growing desire for knowledge and civilization has led to the foundation of scientific bodies, laboratories, and museums. If, curiously enough, the history of mankind was the last seriously undertaken, America may now boast of several prosperous institutions interested in the history of aboriginal culture or the archæology of Europe or other continents. Has not the time come for a comprehensive study of our white ancestors and the fast-vanishing phases of their daily life?

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